ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF ISLANDS AND INLETS

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Dear friends,

In the early 1990s, when a mentor of mine suggested I ought to consider ordained ministry, I literally could not imagine it as a possibility. Even though women had been ordained in Canada since shortly after my birth, I had never seen a woman priest.

My British grandmother was a life-long Church of England member who went to church at least twice a week. When I told her I was considering the priesthood, she said, "I just can't imagine a woman at the front." As we were having this conversation in the 1990s, and women were not ordained in the U.K. until 1997, this made abundant sense.

While the first six female priests in the Anglican Church of Canada were ordained in 1976, this diocese did not permit the ordination of women to the priesthood until 1987. I am, as many of you know, the first woman to serve as Bishop of this diocese.

I tell you all of this as we prepare to host the celebration of the 50th anniversary of women's ordination to the priesthood in the Anglican Church of Canada on November 24-25. This diocese is hosting this celebration because the Rev. Canon Jeannine Friesen stepped forward and said that this was an important milestone to mark and that she was willing to organize a national celebration in this diocese.

Over 150 people from across Canada are gathering at our cathedral for a two-day conference to mark this occasion. The conference will conclude with a public worship service at the cathedral at 4pm on Wednesday, November 25. Bishop Ann Martha Keenainak, who serves at the iconic St. Jude's Cathedral of the Arctic in Iqaluit, will be presiding. Her hands, lovingly tattooed with traditional and modern Inuit tattoos, will bless the bread and the wine. Dean Kay Short of the Cathedral in Corner Brook, Newfoundland, will be the preacher. The service will celebrate the ministry of women in the Anglican Church from coast to coast to coast.

It would mean a great deal to me, to all the women who are travelling from across Canada to join this celebration, and to all those dioceses and parishes across the country who are organizing watch parties, if as many people as possible from our diocese would fill the cathedral for this historic event. I invite those of you who cannot join in person to consider a watch party in your own parish. The service will be livestreamed on the cathedral website.

This conference and Eucharist will be a joy-filled event where we celebrate the Spirit of God and how she has called the Church to see that in Christ, "*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus*". *(Galatians 3:28*).

Peace,

+ Anna Greenwood-Lee

The Right Rev Anna Greenwood-Lee
bishop